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Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-sixth session
31 May-24 June 2016
Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2014-2015

(*Item 3 (a)*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2014-2015

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 31 May 2016, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/71/75).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Management introduced the programme performance report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the report, terming it useful and interesting and stressing that it constituted an important accountability and management tool in the Organization's results-based-budgeting process. They noted with satisfaction that, by combining a results-based analysis with an output-oriented analysis, a comprehensive overview of how the United Nations had performed during the biennium had been provided.

4. Some delegations expressed the view that the report was overly long and detailed, criticizing the lack of a comprehensive summary. The view was expressed that key sections would benefit from the inclusion of financial information, shorter narrative descriptions and a stronger focus on impacts and results in terms of expected accomplishments and the achievement of outputs.

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5. While partially agreeing with that view, some delegations said that any proposal to change the format of the report must be discussed and approved by the General Assembly. Delegations referred to the importance of the sections on lessons learned while highlighting that departments and offices could make use of those experiences to improve their work in the future.

6. Some delegations remarked on the positive trend reported in the increase in the rate of implementation of mandated outputs from 91 per cent during the biennium 2012-2013 to 94 per cent during the biennium 2014-2015. Clarification was sought as to whether that increase had led to any qualitative deterioration. Suggesting that some departments had reported lower-than-expected implementation rates in previous bienniums owing mainly to reasons beyond their control, a delegation suggested that a more realistic approach should be taken when preparing the strategic frameworks, notably their indicators.

7. Concerning the additional outputs, a delegation noted that, according to the report, during the biennium 2014-2015, 61 per cent of the total number of additions had been required by intergovernmental bodies, while the remaining 39 per cent had been initiated by the Secretariat. Clarification was sought regarding the latter, notably what was the assessment of those additional outputs and how Member States would verify that those discretionary outputs had been derived from legislative mandates.

8. Clarification was sought as to a specific mandate for the implementation of the Human Rights Up Front policy by the Secretary-General, as reported under section 24, Human rights, in addition to the reasons for the substantial increase in the number of discretionary outputs under the section. Information was also sought on challenges and lessons learned under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, notably what were the four simultaneous level-III emergencies that had strained the surge mechanisms of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and what countries had been assisted by the Office in response to major emergencies during the biennium. Furthermore, information was sought as to the reasons for the disparity in the number of outputs reported as implemented by the regional commissions, especially in circumstances in which the scope and nature of the work shared similar characteristics.

9. While the positive results reported through the global survey on the PaperSmart initiative were noted, the view was expressed that the Secretariat should continue to provide information on the impact of the reduction in the number of printed documents on the intergovernmental decision-making process at United Nations meetings and conferences. It was emphasized that the Secretariat had an obligation to make available all documentation for intergovernmental discussions in printed format.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/71/75).**